

**Board of Veterans Services
Veterans and the Arts Working Group
Meeting Minutes
December 18, 2018**

A meeting of the Veterans and the Arts Working Group was held on Tuesday, December 18, 2018 at the Basin Barroom inside the Whole Foods at 520 12th Street South, Suite 100, Arlington, VA 22202.

Members Present

Julie Waters, Chair
Victor Angry
Carl Bedell
Frank Reyes

Members Absent: none

No members of the public were in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 am.

Each member discussed what he or she has done since the group's first meeting on 19 September 2018. Since that meeting, Joana Garcia left the working group due to her resignation from BVS, and Frank Reyes joined the working group. Ms. Waters stated that she spoke with Mr. Richard Casper, co-founder of the nonprofit organization CreatiVets. CreatiVets identifies veterans at-risk of suicide and sponsors courses in the arts; Mr. Casper is always looking for state universities that will provide discounted room and board and in-state tuition for his programs. Mr. Bedell contacted the Virginia Arts Commission and discovered that Margie Van der Hye's position is now filled by Janet Starke. Mr. Angry conducted research on the Mighty Pen Project via the Virginia War Memorial. Mr. Reyes was in contact with Creative Forces, a DoD/Veterans Affairs organization that partners with nonprofit organizations to provide arts services to veterans.

The group brainstormed the best ways we could make an impact. We discussed the need for a centralized hub or clearinghouse to aggregate arts resources for veterans; there are many nonprofit and state organizations out there, but a major limitation is awareness of those programs and connected the right veterans to the right programs. A potential recommendation to the Board might be to hire staff dedicated to creating, maintaining, and marketing such a database. We also discussed implementing a larger veteran-produced-art initiative for Virginia government agencies and offices. Lastly, we discussed partnering with existing nonprofits to bring more arts programming to Veterans Care Centers.

Next tasks: Ms. Waters will reach out to Clay Mountcastle with the Virginia War Memorial to get his input on needs for veterans in Virginia. Mr. Reyes will research how Virginia connects veterans to arts resources, if there is a central resources at all. Mr. Angry will research what other states with large veteran populations are doing in the arts. Mr. Bedell will reach out to Ms. Starke at the Virginia Arts Commission to see what they do to specifically target veterans, and will contact the Veteran Care Centers to find out what arts programs they currently offer patients and whether they would like to offer more.

The working group's next meeting will be held in February; members would like to have Carrie Ann Alford present if possible. Ms. Waters will contact Ms. Alford about her schedule and send possible dates to the group.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 am.